



HEALTH AFFAIRS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

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MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MRAI&E)

SUBJECT: Policy Memorandum - Data Quality Management Control (DQMC) Program

This memorandum establishes policy for implementation of the Data Quality Management Control Program for the Military Health System (MHS). The quality of our data is paramount to the success of our data driven enterprise. Decision-makers at all levels of the MHS are dependent on reliable information. Data are used within facilities to monitor performance improvement efforts and to improve outcomes. In addition, data are used comparatively among facilities to establish benchmarks. Regrettably, some of the MHS data currently collected and reported are unreliable and the MHS must immediately devote increased attention to improve the quality of our data.

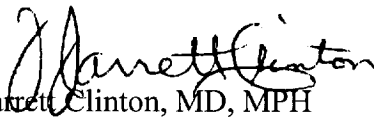
The General Accounting Office (GAO) report, "Medicare Subvention Demonstration: DOD Data Limitations May Require Adjustments and Raise Broader Concerns," May 1999, states that "the DOD cost system problems GAO and others have reported on over the years persist and continue to affect the DOD health care activities that rely on these systems." Additionally, the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) identified significant material management control weaknesses regarding the Composite Health Care System outpatient workload data in the Audit Report titled "Data Supporting the FY98 DoD Military Retirement Health Benefits Liability Estimate," April 1999. The DoDIG directed the MHS to develop and implement a data quality assurance and management control program, which complies with DoD Directive 5010.38, "Management Control Program" and OMB Circular No. A-123, Subject: "Management Accountability and Control."

Tri-Service working groups developed the MHS DQMC Program to improve the overall quality of our financial and clinical workload data. The program provides command oversight and recommended structure to improve the submission of complete, accurate, and timely data and to assure uniformity and standardization of information across the MHS. The attachments provide guidelines and reporting requirements under the DQMC Program.

The Data Quality (DQ) Manager at the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) shares responsibility with colleagues from resource and information management and patient administration to complete the monthly DQMC Review List (Attachment 1). Once the list is completed, the DQ Manager briefs the results to the MTF's executive committee. The commander forwards a Monthly Data Quality Statement (Attachment 2) to the Service's DQ Manager.

The Service DQ Manager is responsible for consulting with the MTFs' DQ Managers to implement and monitor the DQMC Program. Data quality deficiencies and findings will be briefed to the Service Surgeons General and then forwarded with proposed corrective actions to the Resource Management Steering Committee (RMSC) through the Management Control Program Office in TMA/RM. Metrics from the DQMC Program will be reported in TRICARE Operational Performance Statements (TOPS) and presented in briefings to the Deputy Surgeons General. Additionally, I will provide an annual statement of assurance to the Secretary of Defense regarding the status of the DQMC Program.

The overall objective of the DQMC Program is to improve the quality of our financial and clinical workload data, without placing undue burden on our MTFs. The DQMC program and reporting requirements have been tested in Region 11 and full implementation of the DQMC throughout the MHS is effective immediately.


J. Jarrett Clinton, MD, MPH
Acting Assistant Secretary

Attachments:
As stated

cc:
Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force
Executive Director, TRICARE Management Activity